

The Shine Cast

Episode 1 – Katie: The Evil Part of the Brain

Transcript

JORDIE:

Ready, let's get started.

LINNEA:

OK.

JORDIE:

Hello and welcome to The Shine Cast, where we're opening up conversations around mental health, mental illness, how we cope and how we thrive through our journeys. I'm Jordie Lescard

LINNEA:

And I'm Linnea Velikonja. The Shine Cast may touch on potentially triggering material, take care of yourself while listening and know that it's OK to take a break or skip onto the next episode. Check out the episode description for full details on what we'll be talking about. We hope you enjoy the podcast. Today, we're with Katie McLean, who is the coordinator of the On Campus Living. She did her undergraduate at Guelph for Psychology, Master of Education at Ottawa and a master of arts and counseling psychology. She plans to graduate in 2022. Hello, Katie. Thank you for joining us.

KATIE:

Hi. Thanks for having me. I'm so excited to be here.

LINNEA:

So, you are studying counseling psychology right now?

KATIE:

So, it's kind of funny because counseling was always like my dream job. So, people find that really funny because it's like weird for a kid to be like, "I wanna own a private practice and be a counselor."

JORDIE:

What do you think kind of inspired you to like at that age to think I wanna be a counselor? You're kind of right. Like, it's a little I know I wanted to be a firefighter for a long time, and then...

LINNEA:

(UNKNOWN)



KATIE:

Yeah. Like, I've always just really valued good conversations and like, I'm a talker. Like, I love to talk to people. People tell me I talk too much and I reject that. I reject that because you know what I mean everybody is unique individual and everybody's beautiful. So, although sometimes I still struggle with that to be honest. But I am a good talker. I love to talk to people, but I also love to listen. I love hearing people's stories. I love being a supportive person. I think I've always been like an empath. Some people really hate that term. But I've always just been really empathetic to people. And my parents are both teachers. And my dad was actually a guidance counselor in junior high school for quite a number of years.

So, I think I also had that kind of modeling for my parents of being like caring and supportive. And we used to volunteer at a family, at a homeless shelter where we'd set up beds for people and feed them dinner and whatever. So, I grew up in this kind of like caring, supportive kind of environment. So, yeah, like that's just always been kind of a passion of mine to support people and kind of understand where you're coming from 'cause people everybody has such a different story.

LINNEA:

'Cause you're a coordinator with on campus living like correct? What does that role what do you do in that role?

KATIE:

Yes, I'm actually I'm a coordinator of neighborhood relations and off campus living. So, I do advising for off campus students. So, and I also have a team of students that are Peer Helpers like (UNKNOWN). And yeah. So, I really love working with my peer helpers. I love being a supervisor. It's like as close to counseling as I can be without being a counselor. And same with advising because I get to hear those people's stories and I get to kind of help them through vulnerable moments where they're upset or they're trying to navigate like what is my role in this situation? How do I communicate with other people involved? How do I communicate with my roommates?

How do I rectify these situations? So, in my role I use solution focused therapy as kind of a guide. And I teach my peers solution focused therapy techniques. And basically, in solution focused therapy you're trying to help people get from point A to point B. So, rather than kind of like digging into the problem being like, "OK, what's the problem?" You're focused on what's the solution?

So, it's like, OK, we've heard the problem. Now that's where you are right now and where do you want to be? So, when you think about that as a line from point A to point B you have to figure out what are the steps in between A and B to get there. So, 'cause sometimes it's really hard especially when you're upset or frustrated or in a moment of crisis where you're dealing with potentially losing your housing. It can be really hard to kind of clarify like what exactly do I need to do to get out of this?



JORDIE:

Yeah, that's definitely a very powerful, like I would say, like scaffolding or theory to use like having someone who is solutions focused when you're talking about a problem is super powerful. Like I talk with a lot of people who kind of their problem focused a lot of the time. And so, like, it is refreshing when especially in the role you're in, to encounter someone who's so focused on solutions. So, that's like, right off the bat. I just think that's fantastic. That's great.

KATIE:

But like I said, I'm not a counselor. I'm not a social worker. But when you're dealing with someone's basic need like housing you are supporting them through a very important aspect of their life.

JORDIE:

Yeah, certainly seems like a like an excellent fit. Like when I think of someone who would be great for that role.

KATIE:

Thank you. I'll tell my boss that.

JORDIE:

Yeah. Hopefully you can get a raise just for my recommendation alone. So, you're studying right now, your master's in psychology counseling. So, what's your research focus like. What are you handling right now?

KATIE:

Yeah. So, my master's is actually an...it's like a professional degree. So, it's not actually research based. So, yeah, like a lot of what I do and what I'm doing right now in my courses is learning about Jungian theory. So, Carl Jung is like one of Freud's students if you're a psych student listening to this.

LINNEA:

Is there a particular population or topic of psychology or mental health you'd wanna work with?

KATIE:

I used to work in a group home for youth and I found that was very rewarding but very challenging work. So, I really like working with youth, like working with students a lot. A lot of people experience their first experience of mental health while they're a student or like in that kind of like 18 to 24 kind of range.

LINNEA:

Did you feel like when you were a teenager did you have any experiences of your own like challenges?



KATIE:

Yeah. So, when I was like a kid and in high school I was like the most confident and most outgoing kind of person, like had a million friends but didn't really have like one friend group was just kind of like a floater in every school. But like everyone I also had like social challenges. I was bullied sometimes when I was little. And I kind of I see myself as having these two sides of like outwardly I'm very confident and outgoing and extroverted. But sometimes inside I feel like really crabby by myself or I feel like I don't fit in I'm a little different than the masses. So, those are kind of pieces that have always been with me. But I never really dealt with any kind of like, mental health issue until my 18th birthday because I went out to a club with some friends for my birthday because I'm from Calgary. So, 18 is the legal age. So...

LINNEA:

Oh, my gosh, I'm Edmontonian. We're just we're rivals now.

KATIE:

Nice. But another Albertan we can be together on this one.

LINNEA:

Alright.

KATIE:

But yeah. So, the legal age is 18. So, we went out to a club and as soon as I got there I was like, this is a nightmare. I can't be here. And I was like, what is happening? So, I went to the bathroom and my friend was like, "Oh, you feel sick?" And I was like, "Yeah, I think I'm going to throw up. And she's like, "Oh, I should have brought Tums." And I was like, Oh my God, I should have brought Tums. Like what? Like, Oh my God, I should have like you're so right." And so, I didn't know that this was a panic attack at the time. I just felt terrible. And I was like, I gotta go. So, I called my parents and they came back and picked me up and I was only there for like maybe half an hour.

And then a couple other things happened kind of in that week. So, same kind of thing happened. I went to my friend had a party. I went and I was feeling really weird like getting out of the car. And I was like, "I just feel sick. Like I think to throw up I have this weird flu thing." And my dad's like, "Well, it's kind of weird that when you're in the car you feel fine but as soon as you have to get out of the car you feel terrible. And then as soon as we say we're gonna go home you feel fine." He's like, "I don't think you have a weird kind of flu I think you're experiencing anxiety."

And I was like, "What? I don't know about that." And I'm like, "I don't even really know what that is." But yeah, like I said, he was a guidance counselor so he identified it right away. And I'm so grateful for that because my dad recognized it. And as soon as he recognized it my parents were like, "Maybe you should see a counselor." And I was like, "Yep, 100% gonna go that's great." Like, I, I don't know if it's because my dad was a guidance counselor or what but I never felt like limited by the stigma of seeing a counselor. I was like, "Yep, I need help, I'm going, this sucks."



Like so I went to see a counselor and she drew a picture of my brain and she circled the amygdala and she's like, "This is what you're experiencing your amygdala is just firing it's telling you that you're in fight or flight when you're not." And she's like, "Has there been any, like, changes in your life lately?" And I was like, "Not really but I'm moving to Ontario for school in two months." And she's like, "Well, obviously that's a huge transition. So she's like, "Maybe that's something that's kind of triggering this anxiety for the first time." I was just in the midst of yeah like graduating from high school and like this huge life change that I hadn't really acknowledge as a huge life change I was just like, "Yeah I'm moving to Ontario no big deal."

Yeah. I've dealt with anxiety on and off since then and a lot of different ways. It was a lot worse when I was a student because I was figuring it all out like this was I think two months before I started first year. So, yeah, I went through probably like four or five years where it was a lot heavier. And now I mean I manage it pretty well. But I think it is something I'll probably live with forever. And...

JORDIE:

Yeah. So, for people who aren't familiar with like what a panic attack or I like anxiety kind of feels like physiologically like 'cause I mean I think maybe then people might be able to see it in themselves. I know for me that was something that I when I kind of heard what other people's symptoms for depression were, I was like, "Oh, wait I kind of check off a lot of those boxes." Maybe I started to like, "Oh, maybe that's going on with me." So...

KATIE:

Yeah, it's tough to explain a panic attack. It's in honesty they manifest in a lot of different ways. Even within myself I've had some really weird ones. Like one time I was at a Blue Jays game and my arms just started going numb and I was like, "This doesn't feel great." Until I got really scared. And then my whole face and my whole neck and my whole chest went numb. And I was just like tingling. And I was like, "What is happening?" And so, it was really weird. That was really scary. But I'm pretty sure that that was a panic attack because it was just like kind of came on and like when I was able to distract myself it wasn't as severe like those first couple of panic attacks that I had would be more of like a textbook panic attack where my heart will be beating really fast.

But it's a lot of emotional things happening at the same time. So, you have all these thoughts like, "I need to call 911 like I need to get out of here I need to like I need help right away." And then someone like us to help. And you're like, "Do not touch me do not come near me if you touch me this thing will happen like ten times as much." So, like, all of your senses are like super, super heightened. I remember my brother was working at a restaurant when I first started having panic attacks and he brought home chili chicken one day. And I was like, "This smells absolutely awful."

Like I can't even handle this smell 'cause it felt like it was like triggering a panic attack because my sense of smell was just so heightened. My like, if someone touched me I'd just feel like pins and needles I'd be like just the most terrible feeling. It can manifest in so many ways. Some people have, like, really bad



chest pain. They feel like they're having a heart attack. I find my breathing gets really shallow. So, one of the things I do to help my anxiety is practice breathing exercises when I'm not feeling anxious so that if I am feeling anxious I can address it and I know what to do. But yeah, there's so many symptoms. Panic attacks are crazy. Like they're so like your whole body just kicks into overdrive and it's like, "Let's go."

It's weird because there's also this other side of your brain that's like, "You're fine you know you're fine everything's OK and this is going to pass in a couple of minutes." But then the other evil part of your brain is like, "No, it's not you're gonna feel like this forever."

JORDIE;

Yeah, like certainly intense. Like...

LINNEA:

Yeah.

KATIE:

Yeah, certainly intense, yeah.

JORDIE:

Yeah. You said you kind of had like periodically like anxiety and like some panic attacks. How did that kind of impact your when you moved and start your first year of university? How did that kind of affect your academics and like your life and kind of balancing all those responsibilities for the first time?

KATIE:

So, I am like a little bit of an anomaly in terms of my own mental health because I was like very, very open about everything from like moment one. Because I found that that really helped me. So, when I moved into Res, I lived in East and I literally told all my roommates, like, "Hi, just so you know I have anxiety and I don't even really know what it is. I've only had it for two months but it's terrible. And sometimes I won't wanna do things. And like sometimes I need a little extra support." And like two or three of the girls that lived in my suite of 12 we're like, "Oh yeah, I've had anxiety since I was 12." And I was like, "What?"

Like, what? Because all summer I was like, "Oh my God. Like I'm moving to Res and everybody's gonna want to drink and party and I don't want to drink and part. I just need to chill and I need to take care of myself." And drinking and partying because I had my first panic attack at a club and a party probably those were things that kind of like we're triggering for me. So, I was like really, really nervous about all that. But as it turned out like half of the girls in my suite didn't drink at all. And like, they were all like super fun interesting girls.

Like coming to university was different than I expected. All those stereotypes about how students are I found out are not necessarily true. And there's like such a diversity of what people like to do and who



they are. Academics wise honestly, I was really lucky that I did pretty well in school. I felt like actually going to class and being in a routine and doing my studies and stuff was really good for me. But I consider myself fortunate in that way because that's not the case for everyone. So

LINNEA:

No, I think. Do you think it was because your father understood it like right away and was able to kind of validate those feelings for you? 'Cause I think a lot of people's parents don't have those tools with them.

KATIE:

Yeah, no, I think I'm really lucky. My mom was the same. Like as soon as I started having panic attacks, like she went to someone at her school and talk to them and came home with a big bundle of resources and was like, "Hey, let's try this medication together and yeah that was really cool and like "Oh, my gosh, you guys are gonna make me cry because I haven't talked about this in a long time." My parents were like, "No, like, we got this and it's fine to be emotional." And like whatever. So, yeah, I'm really, really grateful for that aspect of my story for sure. I think it did make a huge impact.

LINNEA:

That's so heartwarming to hear.

KATIE:

And my mom's gonna cry when she hears that (UNKNONW). Hi mom.

JORDIE:

You know I think a lot of people don't encounter that kind of support right away. It's like having that opportunity I have to say, your parents are exceptional in that regard of being immediately open really tackling it. 'Cause I think with anxiety issues or like with mood disorders, like a lot of times you can kind of play for a long time without ever being addressed. And so, there's a lot of confusion that kind of builds up. And it seems like in your case it was like bam right away crystal clear what it is what's going on. And so, it kind of made things easier 'cause...

LINNEA:

You're not getting old.

KATIE:

There's so much stigma.

JORDIE:

Yeah.

KATIE:



My parents were both like, “OK, sounds like you have this thing let's deal with it.” And then when I went to university I was like, “Hi, everyone and then I have this.” It’s like I did not care.

LINNEA:

And this is me.

KATIE:

Yeah, exactly. I was like I don't care who knows because like...

LINNEA:

That’s so awesome.

KATIE:

..it’s part of me now and I ain't about to hide it because that's gonna be way harder.

LINNEA:

So, being in university kind of figuring it out did you find that you had strategies that helped you when a panic attack was coming on?

KATIE:

Yeah, totally. So, actually I found that like first second year I was kind of just coasting and, like, really enjoying the periods where I wasn't feeling super anxious. And then when I was feeling super anxious, I was like, “Oh, no, it's back.” And like, “I'm gonna have to deal with this forever again.” Like, I was like, “No, this is like fly me this is so unfair. I'm never going to live a normal life.” And I would picture things like my wedding and picture having kids and be like, “I'm not like, how am I ever gonna have a wedding and have a panic attack at the wedding? Like, I can't do this.”

So, those are the kinds of thoughts that would come into my head when I was in those kind of like heightened periods of anxiety. But I remember one day we went to Barry for Thanksgiving or whatever and I was really anxious staying with his family. I was like super nervous. And this boyfriend is now my husband just to put that note out there.

JORDIE:

(UNKNOWN)a little bit.

KATIE:



Yeah (UNKNOWN) Yeah he's super supportive to this day. But he was at that time, too. And I remember I just took a breath and like went into his room. I was sitting on the floor and I was like, "You know what? I can't go I can't be in this cycle forever." I can't like every time I feel anxious I can't be like, "Oh, my God, it's back why me?" Like, that whole cycle of like all these thoughts. And I was like, "I can't, I can't do that I need to just accept that this might be my reality forever." And like, it was such a massive weight lifted off my shoulders in that moment. Like, I remember sitting on the floor and just deciding that in the moment and like my entire life changed in that second. Because I can't just like when I get anxious, I can't just work on my mental health then. Like, I need to work on it all the time.

So, I made a commitment to myself that I was like, "If I don't feel anxious this week I'm gonna do my breathing exercises like every day." And like a lot of people with anxiety will be like, "Don't tell me to breathe this is not helpful." But it actually is super helpful. But you need to practice it because you can't just whip it out when you're anxious 'cause your body's like, "No, I don't have that capability right now we're in a fight or flight I don't have time to breathe." So, like, you have to practice it when you're not anxious.

And one of the counselors on campus actually said to me, "Your body cannot be anxious in that state. If you breathe slow enough to get your heart rate down your body cannot be anxious." And so, that's kind of like a bit of a mantra that I took from that one session because now when I do my breathing exercises, it's like, OK, I'm practicing to get my heart rate to that state. I'm not practicing that to get rid of the anxiety. I'm not practicing that to cure myself. The heart rate is like the key. So that was like super helpful. But also like just being really intentional with my self care. Like, I'm really good at saying no to stuff that I don't think is good for me or like I'm really good at saying no when I'm like, "Nope, I'm overwhelmed I don't have time."

Because I have learned over the years that I don't owe people explanations on why I need to take care of myself. I just get to. And we all get to and that's a really hard thing to do. Yeah. So, like saying no but also saying yes like saying yes to things that are good for me and challenging myself and not avoiding things that make me anxious. There is yeah, it's a big balancing act of like finding those lines mindfulness meditation, yoga, just honestly, like trying to eat healthy, sleep well, drink water. Like all of these basics make such a huge difference. Like that's another balancing act to be when is it the emotional stuff that I need to address and when is it just like, "I'm tired I didn't drink any water today." Or those kinds of pieces 'cause...

LINNEA:

You've kind of become a detective with your own mental health.

JORDIE:

Yeah. Like your self awareness over like all the things that impact how you feel is like it's quite remarkable. I know right now I'm in my fourth year of my undergrad in psychology and through the years I've learned more and more about self-care. And it's only like the last year that I've kind of made



that kind of progress of being like intentional and knowing what all those factors are. But you put it perfectly. It's like the intentional self-care and that it's a balancing act.

KATIE:

Yeah, I'm 27. So, to you students like that's old. Like I graduated five years ago, so I've had some time to figure this stuff out. But totally like going back to me learning about Carl Jung right now. Like he talks about this, it's like a lifelong process of introspection. And he says, "For people it doesn't even come until your middle age." There's like kind of a twist in your life that you're like, "Oh, you know what? I don't need to chase (UNKNOWN) and be so like career focused and money focused or whatever it is. And I need to turn inward and kind of understand who I am."

And that's how you become whole. So, important that people understand that self cares isn't selfish and like that's such a basic statement and it said a thousand times. But it's so true. So, people need to like it's actually selfish to not have self care because if you don't have it who else is filling your cup when you're cup is empty? Are you asking your friends to fill it? Are you asking your parents to fill it? Are you asking your profs to fill it?

LINNEA:

So, interesting 'cause I just recently saw this post too that said, "Self care is knowing that you're more than productivity." I was like, "Oh, yes" (UNKNOWN)

KATIE:

Yeah.

LINNEA:

'Cause I think...

JORDIE:

Especially in the academic sphere, that we're all kind of and that's something that's really like it's really good to hear every once in a while. It's like, "Oh yeah."

KATIE:

Absolutely. If you're a student like you are worth so much more than your grades. You need to think of yourself as this valuable jam. There was this girl and she ran this program called the 'Thought Diet'. And that really stuck with me because the 'Thought Diet' kind of expects you...I don't think it exists anymore. But you can do this yourself. You can think about like what thoughts of that are really pervasive. Like, I have to be productive, I have to get a certain grade, I have to get such and such a job, I have to have a partner, I have to be married by 25.

Whatever it is one of those thoughts are so pervasive. Did you actually put in your own brain? Because a lot of them you did not. A lot of them came from your parents, your teachers, your social media



influences. Whatever it is and you didn't even put it there and you're living your life by that standard like why? A lot of it doesn't make sense.

JORDIE:

'Cause I think it makes like it kind of brings ownership over your ideas and kind of really challenges like how you were socialized or the influences that are in your life. They kind of make you aware of that and then kind of helps you identify more like what's actually what you think as opposed to what someone else imposed on you. I think that that's a very clever 'Thought diet'. That's such a good. Whoever thought of that? That was such a clever they need to be in marketing like that is just such a great.

KATIE:

Yeah. The other piece that kind of goes with that is like what makes you happy and what makes people happy because this is empirically studied stuff. We know what makes people happy. And guess what? It's not getting that job. It's not getting married, it's not buying stuff. It's not owning stuff. Like none of that actually makes us happy. But that's what people put energy into and that's what people think. Make them happy. But what actually makes people happy is gratitude practices and savoring and mindfulness and quality time with people they care about.

Obviously, that's a little weird right now, but you can have time online or write letters or whatever. So, like how many people are like, "Oh, you know what? I'm really chasing gratitude." Like, no, nobody's chasing gratitude but you should be. Especially, on times when I feel anxious and like, you know I'm grateful that I'm breathing right now, I'm grateful that I have a roof over my head, I'm grateful that I have clean water.

JORDIE:

Right. So, like, there's all that goodness is there. All those good things are there. It's just so easy because we're kind of problem solving creatures that we're looking at the bad. If we don't like the bad and want the bad away as we take the good for granted. And so, it's just kind of opening up that you kind of seeing everything more clearly.

KATIE:

Yeah, I think, like gratitude is a really great way to focus on positivity without getting into that realm of, like, toxic positivity where you're like, "I have to feel good, I have to be good, like I have to be better or whatever." Because you can feel sad and also be grateful. You can be dealing with really tricky things and being like, "You know what? I'm gonna sit in these feelings and that's OK. I'm gonna just be sad for a bit, but also be grateful." So, I think, yeah, like for me gratitude has been really a life changing thing



because it does allow me to be positive and focus on those positive pieces without negating the really real nitty gritty pieces of life. Including my own anxiety.

JORDIE:

Do you find that other people's negativity like impacts you kind of influence you?

KATIE:

Yeah, for sure. I think other people's emotions influence our emotions. I don't know. I think it's also like I probably try to surround myself with people that I enjoy being around them. I also have, like, very strong boundaries because of my own mental health.

Like, that's another self care piece. So, you're definitely not alone though.

LINNEA:

For sure (UNKNOWN).

JORDIE:

Yeah. Like, I don't know I just there's something that, you know, I do some counseling and I like I've learned through time that kind of the way in my childhood that I learned to survive with my experience was kind of riding other people's emotions kind of kept me safe 'cause I knew when people were really upset or if, like, there's a dangerous situation, I knew how to kind of like keep everyone happy so that when I was kind of in a safer space. And so, becoming an adult I've kind of had to untrain myself to kind of ride whatever everyone else is feeling. And, you know, reading kind of more like stoic philosophy, kind of helped with that gratitude practices, mindfulness, all that stuff kind of helped me kind of overcome that. And so, what like listening to you like you're right. You're definitely very emotionally intelligent and very very open. And you're very articulate you're very cool.

LINNEA:

Still (UNKNOWN)OK. At the same time, it's like, "Oh, do I talk too much? Do I say too much? Am I rambling? Are they listening? Do they even care?" So, I appreciate that you said that. You're very introspective, you love sharing your story. But at the same time you love being able to share other people's stories with your anxious and alive websites. And I just I wanted to learn more about that. Like, when did it start? What is anxious and alive?



KATIE:

Yes, so in 25 when I graduated I decided I wanted to make a website and I don't even know like how I came up with this idea but I built the whole website in a day and I was like, "I'm going to get other people with mental health issues to write blogs and put them on my website. And then and basically every blog will just be a story." And it's kind of that whole idea of wanting to be who you needed when you were younger. Because when I first experienced anxiety, like I said, I was like, I don't really know what this is.

And I was just like furiously searching the Internet looking for other people that had the same experience as me. And I couldn't find it. I couldn't find it anywhere. And so, I felt very, very alone. I remember thinking, like, this is probably the worst thing that could ever happen to you. And I think that's probably not true now. But it felt like that at the time. I was like, "There's nothing worse than this." And I couldn't find anything that showed that I wasn't alone. So, I knew that there was a lot of people that I had interacted with over the years that had anxiety and depression and all sorts of other things.

And I knew that because I was always very open about my own mental health. So, I had people come to me all the time on Facebook being like, "Hi, Katie, I know we haven't talked in ten years, but like, I'm experiencing anxiety. Would you be OK chatting with me about it?" Yeah anxiousandalive.com if you wanna check it out. It's kind of a static site now. I haven't really done much to it in the last couple of years. But all of the blogs are still there and I still own the domain. And I just whenever it comes up for renewal I just pay to renew the domain because I want that site to stay active even if I'm not doing much on it. But...

LINNEA:

I love that it also has that bonus material of like self care materials and the myths about anxiety and how someone can support someone with anxiety. So, what do you think are some ways like a partner or a family member can support someone who's going through maybe a panic attack at the time?

KATIE:

So, panic attacks are so weird because they're such an acute thing. And I think, like, people go into like emergency response mode. So it's like very hard to tell people like what they should or shouldn't do during a panic attack because if your loved one's having a panic attack they may think they're dying. And you also think they're dying because you're like, what is happening? This seems like they're, you know, they're in shock or whatever, like what is happening? Sometimes you can recognize it for what it is and sometimes you can't. And you might be really scared yourself. So, I think more of like what partners and family members can do is just like support you. You need to be like being a supportive and open person all the time because not everybody is as open about their mental illness as I am.

So, you might not even know that your friend or partner, whoever is experiencing that. So, like letting people feel their emotions or, like if people cry instead of being like, "Don't cry, be like, what can I do?"



What do you need? Do you want space? You want a hug? Do you want water?" Like, whatever. And like just taking their answer at face value, like whatever they want, just be like, "Yup, OK, I'll give you that for this moment. And then like we'll get through this moment and then maybe we can debrief, we can talk about what you were feeling." Or I think the other thing just for people that do have anxiety or depression like you are so worthy of love. I remember when I first started dating my boyfriend who's now my husband I was so worried about my anxiety.

And I was like, this is gonna be the thing that ruins our relationship because I am not gonna want to like I'm gonna be so nervous visiting his family. I'm like, what am I gonna do? Like, this is gonna be so hard. And like, I just thought it was gonna be a deal breaker. But instead, he got me a book for (UNKNOWN) Christmas, maybe my birthday called 'Anxious in Love'. And it was literally a guidebook for partners and family members to learn how to support a partner with anxiety. And I thought that was just like such a beautiful thing that he was like, "Hey, I found this resource that we can do together for some people, some kind of guide like that might be really helpful."

LINNEA:

I love that when I'm kind of in my ruminating space in my little anxiety hole my partner heard this quote somewhere. It was like, 'I love you when you're being human'. Like, Oh, that's so it's nice to hear. Just like understanding, right? Like it's a validation yeah.

KATIE:

It's like validating. Yeah because it totally is. It's like if you're gonna love me come love my whole self. And like especially if you're dating or you're married to someone who's like very like highly emotional like you got to learn how to deal with it 'cause it's going to come out and. Actually, my husband's the exact opposite of me. He's very like stoic, not emotional, and like we've had to do the opposite where I'm like, "Hey, like, what can I teach you about emotional intelligence and what can you teach me about being, like, steady and calm and strong?" Well, I think I'm strong with or without anxiety. And I think everyone that has mental illness is strong because it's really, really hard. But yeah he's taught me a lot, too and he's kind of like stoic less emotional side. And I've been able to help him like process difficult things by being like, "Hey, you know, like it actually is OK to cry. Like doesn't have to be fine right away. It's OK."

LINNEA:

That's (UNKNOWN) to hear I think. Yeah.

With my partner he's getting better at talking about his problems too. And he'll just say things like, "You know, I didn't really know I was so stressed out about this until I started talking about it like thank you for like actually working this out with me." And I was like, "Oh, you're welcome we're team."



KATIE:

Awesome I love that.

JORDIE:

And in my relationship with my girlfriend. I'm definitely more the emotional side of things as like a psychology region kind of really interested in the interpersonal stuff in that way. And she's more legal. That's kind of how I put it. This is a very analytical very to the point direct and logical. And I love her for it because I'm very much like I kind of think of myself as like an artist is all over the place throwing around ideas and just kind of like there's a canvas in front of me that I just throw stuff at. And I need that kind of that structure in my life. So, we teach each other a lot from our different perspectives.

KATIE:

So, I think it is so amazing too when two people find partners that kind of give them that kind of balance. And it's OK to, like, learn from each other and support each other in different ways without thinking that one or the other is better. So, yeah, that was like really impactful for me to be like, this is really cool that we have this balance but it's not because we're like trying to erase or fix aspects of each other. It's just because we both have such unique and totally different things to offer.

JORDIE:

You have to have the diversity of life for us to be some kind of dystopian nightmare. I don't even want to imagine.

LINNEA:

The next (UNKNOWN) novel.

JORDIE:

Thank you so much for sharing your story with panic attacks and anxiety and all your insights and awareness in this mental health space. It's just remarkable, I have to say. I just wondering if there's any last things you want to say before we wrap things up.

KATIE:

I feel like I've got to say something inspirational. Seriously, though, I've already said in the session that like you're worthy of love, you're worthy of feeling happy, you're worthy of feeling better if you're not



feeling better and it gets better gets so much better. Just you need to dig into the things that make you happy and throw out the rest. You'll make it.

LINNEA:

Thank you so much, Katie. I'm really happy you were able to talk with us today.

KATIE:

Yeah. Thank you so much for having me. This was so much fun.

LINNEA:

If you've enjoyed today's podcast you can find us whenever you listen to your favorite podcast.

JORDIE:

The Shine Cast is hosted by Jordie Lescard and Linnea Velikonja. We are produced by Rebecca Skelhorn, Shannon Brown, Tony Nguyen, Charlotte Cherkewski and Melanie Bowman. Editing is done by Dawn Matheson. Artwork is by Emma Hak-Kovac. Special thanks to Dawn Matheson and Shannon Brown for helping us get this podcast off the ground.

LINNEA:

To see more of Emma's work or to keep up with the Wellness Education and Promotion Center projects at the University of Guelph, check out our Instagram page [@wellness_uog](#). For more resources and supports available for the University of Guelph students, visit us at our website at wellness.uoguelph.ca/shine-this-year. Please don't forget to rate and view this podcast. Thanks for listening and we'll see you next time.



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